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Feature Item: *“Challenging Minimum Deterrence: Articulating the Contemporary Relevance of Nuclear Weapons”*. Authored by Maj Joshua D. Wiitala, USAF; published by Air & Space Power Journal; Vol. 30, Issue 1, Spring 2016; 16 pages.

<http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/digital/pdf/articles/2016-Spring/F-Wiitala.pdf>

Since the end of the Cold War, the relevance of US nuclear weapons has been the subject of immense debate. Today, the need to initiate recapitalization programs for key elements of the US nuclear enterprise gives this debate added meaning and urgency. This article evaluates minimum deterrence as an alternative nuclear posture for the United States and concludes that, ultimately, it is inadequate to America's strategic needs. Specifically, minimum deterrence would subvert the long-standing US commitment to a counterforce retaliatory capability, leave the United States ill prepared to deter the limited use of nuclear weapons in otherwise conventional wars, and neglect US extended-deterrence commitments. Instead, this article proposes a posture of dual deterrence made up of both existential deterrence and escalation deterrence. Existential deterrence utilizes the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) legs of the triad to ensure the basic security and survival of the United States. Escalation deterrence utilizes dual-capable bombers and fighters to keep conventional wars conventional and to provide extended deterrence to critical US allies. In doing so, dual deterrence offers a much-needed basic framework for understanding the increasingly important recapitalization of the US nuclear enterprise.

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International Business Times (IBT) (U.S. Edition) – New York, NY

US Nuclear Weapons: Amid Threats from Russia, China, North Korea, \$450B Modernization Program Pushed

By Christopher Harress

February 25, 2016

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has helped reimagine the rivalry between NATO and Russia, forcing the U.S. military to urgently address its aging nuclear-weapons program. But it won't be cheap.

A congressional subcommittee meeting Wednesday heard evidence from Pentagon planners that the cost of replacing and upgrading the country's current nuclear system will be an estimated \$450 billion over 10 years. It could cost less, but money-saving options— like reducing the number of submarines that deliver nuclear weapons — would shrink the size and cost of the arsenal considerably, potentially risking U.S. national security and slashing spending on conventional weapons programs. Defense analysts said scaling back the nuclear arsenal could make the U.S. look weak and destabilize its global allies.

"Unilateral nuclear reductions would absolutely send the wrong message to Russia, China and other adversaries, by allowing them to think they could use and brandish nuclear weapons," said Thomas Karako, a senior fellow on the international security program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a Washington, D.C.-based think tank. "It would also send the wrong message to our allies, Japan, South Korea, Poland, NATO, who all rely on the ultimate backstop of the United States as a support to their own defenses."

Despite congressional fighting from GOP and Democrats over the U.S. defense budget in recent years, there appears to be little pushback in Washington over the estimate of the nuclear upgrade or whether it's essential.

Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Brian McKeon said during the congressional subcommittee on U.S. Strategic Forces meeting that upgrading the country's nuclear deterrent — or building up a stockpile of weapons to prevent being attacked — was the Pentagon's highest priority and completely essential during a period of "geopolitical uncertainty."

Most members of Congress present at the hearing fully agreed, highlighting general bipartisan accord among the key lawmakers over U.S. nuclear powers. Flanking McKeon at the committee was Commander of Strategic Forces Adm. Cecil Haney, who said the systems should be fully upgraded because the "current global security environment is more complex, dynamic and uncertain" than ever before. He also pointed out that the country's rivals had already committed to modernizing and expanding their nuclear capabilities and that the U.S. was obliged to match them.

However, Rep. Rick Larsen D-Wash., a member of the Strategic Forces subcommittee, remains unconvinced of the Pentagon's ability to pay for such a pricey program. "I remain concerned that the Department of Defense is preparing to undertake nuclear modernization programs without fully considering how to pay for and manage them concurrently," Larsen told International Business Times. "We need a clear, feasible and affordable plan to manage the potential bow wave of spending as the programs reach maturity in the 2030s."

While the cost will be spread out over 10 years, accounting for about 5 percent of the country's defense budget each year, the upgrade will likely see other conventional weapons in future budgets being dropped. It's difficult to predict what specific elements of any future defense would face cuts,

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but McKeon pointed out during his testimony that the upgrade would probably hurt conventional U.S. forces, such as orders of aircraft and ships.

There have been varying reports outlining the cost of replacing the country's nuclear forces in the last few years, with one predicting costs to run as high as \$1 trillion over the next 30 years. But there are alternatives.

An August report from the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), a non-partisan Washington, D.C., think tank, outlined areas in which the Pentagon could save money when upgrading the nuclear-weapons system. Some of the biggest savings that could be made between now and 2019 came in the form of cutting the number of ballistic missile nuclear submarines from 14 to 10, saving \$8.1 billion, and eliminating the B61-12 nuclear bomb program to save \$6.3 billion.

Despite the potential for savings, Evan Montgomery, a senior fellow at the CSBA and author of August's report, told IBT via email that Russian presence in the Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad, where it had placed medium-range ballistic missiles, was a concern that means it's unlikely Congress will decide to cut costs.

"The renewed threat from Russia is just one reason why additional reductions in U.S. nuclear weapons don't make much sense right now, but it might be the biggest," said Montgomery. "At a time when Moscow is modernizing its own nuclear forces, violating the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and creating instability throughout its neighborhood, it's hard to imagine that unilateral reductions wouldn't provoke a backlash in Congress."

But it's not just the external threats that are pushing modernization. Since May 2013 the military has been faced with a number of revealing investigations into widespread security lapses and complacency among the Air Force sector of the U.S. military strategic forces, some parts of which date to the 1950s. Two Pentagon studies from late 2014 outlined problems with leadership, personnel and the operation within the strategic forces.

The report mentioned drug abuse, cheating on exams and low morale and cited a bizarre story that missile maintenance crews across the country only had one specialized wrench between them to attach warheads to missiles. The wrench was sent via FedEx from base to base when required.

While these revelations clearly furthered the need to fix issues inside the deterrent forces, they apparently pale in comparison to threats from Russia, China and North Korea, which the congressional subcommittee claimed Wednesday were justifications for fully funding the upgrade and future replacement of the weapons and their accompanying delivery systems.

But not everyone agrees with that assessment.

John Isaacs, acting executive director of the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation in Washington, D.C., claims that the U.S. military planners are using outdated Cold War thinking when rationalizing their decisions to replace the nuclear deterrent and are wrong that nuclear weapons will influence Russian, Chinese and North Korean behavior.

"Unfortunately, nuclear weapons experts are going back to the days when we'd say, 'Oh, the Russians and Chinese are building so we need to build to,'" said Isaacs.



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“There’s also no connection between Russian intervention in Ukraine, Crimea or Chinese expansionism in Asia to the need to build more nuclear weapons. The U.S. has thousands of weapons, and it’s done little to change behavior of our rivals so far,” he said.

<http://www.ibtimes.com/us-nuclear-weapons-amid-threats-russia-china-north-korea-450b-modernization-program-2323907>

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Omaha World-Herald – Omaha, NE

Adm. Cecil Haney Pushes for Nuclear Modernization Program

By Steve Liewer, *World-Herald* staff writer

Thursday, February 25, 2016

The nation must embark on a nuclear modernization program expected to cost \$350 billion to \$450 billion over the coming decade to keep ahead of strategic rivals such as Russia and China, Adm. Cecil Haney warned Congress on Wednesday.

Haney, who heads the Nebraska-based U.S. Strategic Command, often speaks about the need to replace or upgrade several of the military’s nuclear delivery systems.

They include the Trident nuclear submarine, the B-2 and B-52 strategic bombers, the B-61 gravity bomb and the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles.

His audience Wednesday was the House Armed Services subcommittee on strategic forces, which met publicly for an hour before adjourning into a closed, classified session.

The military is facing what’s been called a “bow wave” of expensive modernization in the 2020s because conventional and nuclear weapons systems — many developed during the Reagan defense buildup of the 1980s — are close to wearing out.

The nuclear budget takes up about 3 percent of the military budget, Haney said, but that will rise to 5 or 6 percent in the years ahead. These old planes, ships and weapons can’t be kept much longer.

“We have in many cases stretched out well beyond the life expectancy of many of our platforms,” he said. “It is crucial that we modernize our strategic nuclear deterrence capabilities.”

Brian McKeon, the Pentagon’s principal deputy undersecretary for policy, told the committee that rebuilding the nuclear force is the Obama administration’s “highest priority” in the defense budget.

“We need to find a way to pay for it,” McKeon said.

He and Haney also urged the subcommittee to fund strategic forces at the levels called for in Obama’s 2017 budget proposal.

The plan “begins to reduce some of the risk we have accumulated because of deferred maintenance,” Haney said.

Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Ala., the panel’s chairman, asked Haney about Russia’s request earlier this week for a surveillance flight over the United States under the Open Skies treaty.

The pact allows signatories to fly unarmed aircraft carrying video and still cameras, infrared scanning devices and certain forms of radar over the territory of other treaty members.



U.S. Open Skies missions, for example, use two OC-135 surveillance aircraft belonging to the 55th Wing at Offutt Air Force Base.

Flights must be approved by a commission made up of countries that signed the treaty.

"They file a flight plan. We know where they're going to go," Haney said.

Haney and others have raised concerns, though, about allowing the flights at a time when the U.S. and Russia have been increasingly at odds over Syria and Ukraine.

http://www.omaha.com/news/military/adm-cecil-haney-pushes-for-nuclear-modernization-program/article_a45a863b-264e-5006-b6f7-4f8f829a5dc9.html

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TASS Russian News Agency – Moscow, Russia

Russia Developing New-Generation Armaments for Air and Space Defense — Deputy PM

Next on the line is a space-based missile attack warning system, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin has said

February 20, 2016

KIROV, February 20. /TASS/. Russia is moving along the way of developing new-generation armaments and military hardware for air and space defense, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin said on Saturday.

The vice premier made this statement at the ceremony of opening the Kirov Machine-Building Enterprise, part of Almaz-Antey anti-aircraft missile system manufacturer.

"In fact, we're actively moving along the way of creating a completely new generation of armaments and military hardware for air and space defense, which will help make our facilities fully secure from a potential enemy's sudden missile attack," the vice-premier said.

"Our country has large air space and we have the largest territory in the world and now we're doing everything to reliably protect its frontiers," Rogozin said.

In the epoch of space-based and aerial armaments, the winner is the one who has supremacy in this sphere, the Russian vice-premier said.

Russia has restored its ground-based system, which enables it to see all aggressive targets approaching its territory, be it cruise missiles, supersonic missiles, aircraft or other targets, the vice premier said.

Next on the line is a space-based missile attack warning system, he added.

"The actual struggle today is to get closer in the waiting line and receive the desired [anti-aircraft missile] system, for example, the S-300 complex," the vice premier said.

"But what will be manufactured at the Kirov new enterprise is already a step forward as this involves new systems and something that will have great significance for our country's defense capability and, I'm confident, huge export potential," Rogozin said.

"That is why, this enterprise's significance goes beyond the framework of the country's defense capability alone," the vice premier said.



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"As a whole, this is a big thing done for Russia today during the most difficult period for it - the period of the principled struggle with the sanctions policy [of the West]," the vice premier said.

<http://tass.ru/en/defense/858171>

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Xinhua News – Beijing, China

THAAD Deployment in ROK to "Directly" Impair China's Security Interests: FM

Source: Xinhua

February 24, 2016

BEIJING, Feb. 24 (Xinhua) -- The deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), an advanced U.S. missile defense system, in the Republic of Korea (ROK) will "directly" impair China's security interests, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday.

"We understand the ROK's legitimate security concerns, but no country should impair others' security interests when pursuing its own," Hua Chunying said at a daily news briefing.

"We believe that the deployment of the THAAD system will directly compromise China's national security interests," said the spokesperson.

The United States and the ROK started talks on THAAD after the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) allegedly launched an Earth-observation satellite to test ballistic missile technology earlier this month.

When questioned on media reports that Chinese companies in the border city of Dandong have stopped coal trade with the DPRK, Hua said she was not clear about the reports, noting that the UN Security Council is working on a new resolution on the DPRK.

"As a responsible country, China always strictly abides by Security Council resolutions and practices its due international obligations," Hua said.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-02/24/c_135127964.htm

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Sputnik International – Russian Information Agency

Forewarned is Forearmed: Russia Boosts Its Missile Defense Capabilities

26 February 2016

Using a new type of radar, Russia is about to establish a global early warning network rivaling that of the USSR.

According to the Rossiyskaya Gazeta newspaper, the mainstay of this global defense system will be formed of the third generation Voronezh-type radar stations.

The Voronezh-class radar system includes three variants, including the Voronezh M, Voronezh-DM (using VHF and UHF), and the Voronezh-VP 'high potential', assumed to be EHF (extremely high frequency). The system's range is between 4,500 – 6,000 km, and it is capable of detecting objects at a height of up to 4,000 km.

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Furthermore, Voronezh-class radar is made of factory-built modules and can therefore be rapidly constructed in about a year and a half, while it usually takes from 5 to 9 years to build a radar station of equal capabilities.

Following the dissolution of the USSR, Russia's early warning capability was dealt a severe blow as many of its elements located in the former Soviet republics were promptly shut down by the new authorities. Now however, with the implementation of cutting-edge technologies, the new network is set to surpass its Soviet predecessor and provide early-warning coverage for the entire territory of Russia.

Meanwhile, Russian Armed Forces have deployed two batteries of K-300P Bastion coastal defense missile systems at the Kola Peninsula. According to the Izvestiya newspaper, the deployed weapons cover about 1,500 kilometers of Russia's coastline in the region and effectively transform a sizeable portion of the Barents Sea into a 'dead zone' for NATO warships.

A K-300P battery consists of 12 mobile launchers equipped with P-800 Oniks anti-ship missiles with a range of 300 kilometers.

Following a recent deployment of this type of missile launchers to Crimea, Russia can now engage and destroy any hostile target in both the Black Sea and the Barents Sea, the newspaper remarks, pointing out that the country's Ministry of Defense didn't specify where it might deploy these weapons next.

<http://sputniknews.com/russia/20160226/1035405984/russia-missile-radar-defense.html>

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TASS Russian News Agency – Moscow, Russia

Russia's Strategic Missile Forces to Test-Fire New RS-26 Missile in 2nd Quarter of 2016

The firing is to be conducted in the second quarter of this year from the Kapustin Yar range at the Balkhash range in Kazakhstan

February 20, 2016

MOSCOW, February 20. /TASS/. Russia's Strategic Missile Forces will test-fire an RS-26 Rubezh state-of-the-art intercontinental ballistic missile in the second quarter of 2016, a source in the defense industry sector told TASS Saturday.

"The firing is to be conducted in the second quarter of this year from the Kapustin Yar range at the Balkhash range in Kazakhstan," the source said.

The RS-26 solid-propellant ballistic missile codenamed Rubezh is based on the RS-24 missile. The RS-26 is expected to be lighter than the RS-24 Yars missile and will carry a multiple warhead (the Yars missile is equipped only with one warhead).

The RS-26 will be launched only from mobile systems as it has no silo-based version. The missile is expected to come into service with the Irkutsk missile division of Russia's Strategic Missile Forces in 2016.

The confidence test-firing of the RS-26 was carried out in mid-March 2015.

<http://tass.ru/en/defense/858236>

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The Boston Globe – Boston, MA

US Air Force Test-Launches Minuteman Missile from California

The missile, which blasted off late Saturday from a base in California, headed for a target area in the Marshall Islands.

By Associated Press

February 21, 2016

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — The Air Force said Sunday that an unarmed Minuteman 3 missile was launched from California's central coast in the latest test of the intercontinental system.

The missile blasted off at 11:34 p.m. Saturday from Vandenberg Air Force Base northwest of Los Angeles.

The Air Force said the missile carried a test reentry vehicle that headed for a target area 4,200 miles away in the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

The Air Force routinely uses Vandenberg to test Minuteman missiles. "This specific test will provide accuracy and reliability data that is essential to on-going and future modifications to the weapon system, which are key to improving the already impressive effectiveness of the Minuteman III force," Colonel J. Christopher Moss, 30th Space Wing commander, said in a press release

This test involved personnel from Vandenberg's 576th Flight Test Squadron, the 625th Strategic Operations Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, and the 91st Missile Wing, Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota.

Last week, the US Naval Institute News reported that, in the next decade, US ships and submarines capable of firing Tomahawk cruise missiles probably will be fitted with a variant specifically designed to hit enemy ships up to 1,000 miles away.

Vice Admiral Joseph Mulloy, deputy chief of naval operations for integration of capabilities and resources, told USNI News Wednesday that surface ships would receive the upgraded missiles first, followed by submarines. The move follows the Navy's upcoming \$434 million budget request that would modify a portion of the current stock of Tomahawks with the ability to strike maritime targets.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/news/nation/2016/02/21/air-force-test-launches-minuteman-missile-from-california/Zng9kT5iEejY50iBju8sgK/story.html>

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Sputnik International – Russian Information Agency

Oldies but Goodies: Russia Preps Crews for 'Doomsday Nuke Trains'

22 February 2016

Russia will soon start training crews for its feared missile trains, Echo Moskvyy Radio reported citing the head of the Strategic Missile Forces' military education department, Viktor Nesterov.

Colonel Nesterov said that in 2020 Russia's armed forces will receive a new generation of ICBM-launching trains.

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The Barguzin railroad ICBM system will carry six RS-24 Yars ICBMs, as compared to three RS-22 Scalpels carried by its predecessor, the Molodets railroad ICBM system.

"We need to think ahead... Realizing full well that we are going to need specialists to operate this new missile complex we decided to launch special courses to train such specialists," Viktor Nesterov said.

The Molodets railroad ICBM system, armed with three RS-22 ICBMs was retired in 2005 in keeping with the START-2 treaty. Out of the 12 Soviet-era missile trains, 10 were destroyed and the remaining two were sent to a museum.

Barguzin will be greatly superior to Molodets in terms of range, accuracy, and other characteristics. This will allow the system to remain in service for a long time, at least until 2040, Russia's Strategic Missile Forces commander, Col.-Gen. Sergey Karakaev said.

The missile trains are stealthy and highly mobile, capable of covering up to a thousand kilometers in a single day. Disguised as a freight train, a missile train cannot be spotted either by satellite or electronic surveillance.

All necessary infrastructure, such as tunnels, reinforced tracks and launch sites, is still in place and ready to go.

<http://sputniknews.com/russia/20160222/1035170592/russia-nukes-trains.html>

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Lexington Herald Leader – Lexington, KY

Russia Wants to Fly over US with Advanced Digital Camera

By DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press (AP)

February 22, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Russia will ask permission on Monday to start flying surveillance planes equipped with high-powered digital cameras amid warnings from U.S. intelligence and military officials that such overflights help Moscow collect intelligence on the United States.

Russia and the United States are signatories to the Open Skies Treaty, which allows unarmed observation flights over the entire territory of all 34 member nations to foster transparency about military activity and help monitor arms control and other agreements. Senior intelligence and military officials, however, worry that Russia is taking advantage of technological advances to violate the spirit of the treaty.

Russia will formally ask the Open Skies Consultative Commission, based in Vienna, to be allowed to fly an aircraft equipped with high-tech sensors over the United States, according to a senior congressional staffer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the staff member wasn't authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

The request will put the Obama administration in the position of having to decide whether to let Russia use the high-powered equipment on its surveillance planes at a time when Moscow, according to the latest State Department compliance report, is failing to meet all its obligations under the treaty. And it comes at one of the most tension-filled times in U.S.-Russia relations since the end of the Cold War, with the two countries at odds over Russian activity in Ukraine and Syria.

"The treaty has become a critical component of Russia's intelligence collection capability directed at the United States," Adm. Cecil D. Haney, commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, wrote in a letter earlier this year to Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Ala., chairman of a House subcommittee on strategic forces.

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"In addition to overflying military installations, Russian Open Skies flights can overfly and collect on Department of Defense and national security or national critical infrastructure," Haney said. "The vulnerability exposed by exploitation of this data and costs of mitigation are increasingly difficult to characterize."

A State Department official said Sunday that treaty nations had not yet received notice of the Russian request, but that certification of the Russian plane with a "digital electro-optical sensor" could not occur until this summer because the treaty requires a 120-day advance notification. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

The official also said that the treaty, which was entered into force in 2002, establishes procedures for certifying digital sensors to confirm that they are compliant with treaty requirements. The official said all signatories to the treaty agree that "transition from film cameras to digital sensors is required for the long-term viability of the treaty."

In December, Rose Gottemoeller, undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, sought to temper concerns about Russian overflights, saying that what Moscow gains from the observation flights is "incremental" to what they collect through other means.

"One of the advantages of the Open Skies Treaty is that information - imagery - that is taken is shared openly among all the treaty parties," she said at a joint hearing of the House Foreign Affairs and Armed Services committees in December. "So one of the advantages with the Open Skies Treaty is that we know exactly what the Russians are imaging, because they must share the imagery with us."

Still, military and intelligence officials have expressed serious concern.

"The open skies construct was designed for a different era," Lt. Gen. Vincent Stewart, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, told lawmakers when asked about the Russian overflights during a congressional hearing. "I'm very concerned about how it's applied today."

Robert Work, deputy secretary of defense, told Congress: "We think that they're going beyond the original intent of the treaty and we continue to look at this very, very closely."

Steve Rademaker, former assistant secretary of state for the bureau of arms control and the bureau of international security and nonproliferation, told Congress at a hearing on security cooperation in Europe in October that Russia complies with the Open Skies Treaty, but has "adopted a number of measures that are inconsistent with the spirit" of the accord.

The treaty, for instance, obligates each member to make all of its territory available for aerial observation, yet Russia has imposed restrictions on surveillance over Moscow and Chechnya and near Abkhazia and South Ossetia, he said. Russian restrictions also make it hard to conduct observation in the Kaliningrad enclave, said Rademaker, who believes Russia is "selectively implementing" the treaty "in a way that suits its interests."

<http://www.kentucky.com/latest-news/article61715367.html>

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TASS Russian News Agency – Moscow, Russia

Russia FM Says Arms Control Issues no Less Relevant than During Cold War

Russia's top diplomat pointed to the importance of dialogue between political scientists and civil society in Russia and the United States

February 24, 2016

MOSCOW, February 24. /TASS/. Arms control tasks are no less topical than during the Cold War years, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Wednesday at a meeting with Co-Chairman of the Initiative to Reduce Nuclear Threat and member of the Supervisory Board of the International Luxembourg Forum on Preventing the Nuclear Catastrophe Sam Nunn.

"You are well known in Russia as an influential politician who has made a real contribution to strengthening the strategic stability and arms control," Lavrov said. "At all stages of the activities, you solved these problems through equitable dialogue between our two countries. The NGO you head promotes the same tasks. This is no less topical than during the Cold War years."

Russia's top diplomat pointed to the importance of dialogue between political scientists and civil society in the two countries as "an important way to boost confidence and mutual understanding."

According to Nunn, cooperation between Russia and the United States could be better, because there are enough threats in the world that need to be addressed jointly. He described the initiative on the ceasefire in Syria as extremely important and thanked Putin for the political will shown by him.

US senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar, in accordance with the Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of December 12, 1991, developed the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program (CTR). Under this program, the United States provided assistance to the former Soviet republics in recycling decommissioned nuclear and chemical weapons and their means of delivery. The legal basis for the use of U.S. aid in Russia was the bilateral framework agreement on safe and secure transportation, storage and destruction of weapons and the prevention of weapons proliferation of June 17, 1992 (extended in 1999 and 2006).

The implementation of the program began in 1993. According to the data provided by the American side, more than 7,500 strategic nuclear warheads were put out of operation under the program, about 1,000 intercontinental ballistic missiles, hundreds of missiles of other types, more than 100 bombers and hundreds of missile launchers were scrapped. The U.S. program expired on June 16, 2013.

<http://tass.ru/en/politics/858578>

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Sputnik International – Russian Information Agency

All about Russia After All: Washington's Vow of No New Arms Race Exposed

25 February 2016

While the Obama administration insists that its \$1 trillion plan to upgrade America's nuclear weapon stockpiles is not in any way aimed at deterring Russian "aggression," language in the new defense budget proves otherwise.

The nuclear non-proliferation treaty – agreed to by both the US and Russia – calls on all signatories to further the goal of nuclear disarmament.

Issue No.1204, 24 February 2016

United States Air Force Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies | Maxwell AFB, Alabama

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The Obama administration, however, has found a loophole in the agreement, and plans to funnel nearly \$1 trillion into upgrading America's nuclear arsenal. While these improvements include modifying nuclear-equipped ballistic missiles to make them more accurate, and installing adjustable yields to make nuclear bombs more practical, the US maintains the moves are aimed at sustaining current stockpiles, and are not, technically, upgrades.

It sounds to some a lot like Washington reigniting an old-fashioned Cold War arms race, but the Pentagon insists that this isn't the case.

"The Cold War playbook...is not suitable for the 21st century," US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter told NATO allies last year, according to the Intercept.

But according to the Obama administration's new defense budget, the US nuclear modernization is explicitly meant to deter Russian "aggression."

"We are countering Russia's aggressive policies through investments in a broad range of capabilities...[including] our nuclear arsenal," the budget reads.

This falls in line with statements made by Brian McKeon, the principal deputy undersecretary of defense for policy, in December 2015.

"We are investing in the technologies that are most relevant to Russia's provocations...to both deter nuclear attacks and reassure our allies."

Those "provocations" refer to Russia's alleged invasion of Ukraine, an assertion that Russia has repeatedly denied and for which the United States has provided no evidence. US officials also cited Russia's "invasion" of Crimea, ignoring the fact that the peninsula voted to rejoin Russia in a referendum in which over 96% of the local citizenry approved.

The plan has received fierce criticism from those concerned that the US is pushing the world toward nuclear war.

"The United States is on the cusp of launching an unnecessary, expensive, and potentially dangerous plan to modernize its strategic nuclear forces, helping stimulate what is being called a 'new nuclear arms race,'" Professor Gordon Adams and Richard Sokolsky writes for Defense One.

"The United States can deter any country from using nuclear weapons against America and its treaty allies with a nuclear force that is far smaller, less destabilizing, and less expensive than the one the Pentagon is planning to build."

Criticism is unlikely to derail the project at this point. Most of the contracts have already been signed, including an estimated \$100 billion deal with Northrop Grumman to develop the Pentagon's new long-range bomber, designed to deliver a nuclear payload.

<http://sputniknews.com/us/20160225/1035302351/us-arms-race-exposed.html>

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TASS Russian News Agency – Moscow, Russia

Russian Northern Fleet Submarines to Launch Two Bulava Intercontinental Missiles in 2016

According to a source, the Bulava ballistic missiles will be launched towards the Kura training range in Kamchatka in Russia's Far East

February 26, 2016

MOSCOW, February 26. /TASS/. The Russian Northern Fleet's Project 955 Borei-class nuclear-powered submarines are planned to perform a multiple launch of two Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) in 2016, a source in the defense and industrial sector told TASS on Friday.

The Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles will be launched towards the Kura training range in Kamchatka in Russia's Far East, the source added.

"It has not been decided yet when a multiple launch of Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles will be performed and which submarine will be used," the source said.

"The launch is likely to be performed from the Barents Sea in the first half of the year. Either the submarine Yuri Dolgoruky, or the submarine Vladimir Monomakh will launch the missiles," the source added.

According to the source, a decision on the submarine will be made depending on "the fleet's combat training program and the submarine's technical readiness."

A multiple launch of two Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles was last performed by the nuclear-powered submarine Vladimir Monomakh on November 14, 2015.

The Russian Defense Ministry said at the time that "the reentry vehicles have successfully reached the Kura training range in Kamchatka."

<http://tass.ru/en/defense/859088>

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Reuters (U.S. Edition) – New York, NY

U.S. Test-Fires ICBMs to Stress its Power to Russia, North Korea

By David Alexander

Friday, February 26, 2016

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, CALIF. -- The U.S. military test-fired its second intercontinental ballistic missile in a week on Thursday night, seeking to demonstrate its nuclear arms capacity at a time of rising strategic tensions with Russia and North Korea.

The unarmed Minuteman III missile roared out of a silo at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California late at night, raced across the sky at speeds of up to 15,000 mph (24,000 kph) and landed a half hour later in a target area 4,200 miles (6,500 km) away near Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands of the South Pacific.

Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work, who witnessed the launch, said the U.S. tests, conducted at least 15 times since January 2011, send a message to strategic rivals like Russia, China and North Korea that Washington has an effective nuclear arsenal.

"That's exactly why we do this," Work told reporters before the launch.



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"We and the Russians and the Chinese routinely do test shots to prove that the operational missiles that we have are reliable. And that is a signal ... that we are prepared to use nuclear weapons in defense of our country if necessary."

Demonstrating the reliability of the nuclear force has taken on additional importance recently because the U.S. arsenal is near the end of its useful life and a spate of scandals in the nuclear force two years ago raised readiness questions.

The Defense Department has poured millions of dollars into improving conditions for troops responsible for staffing and maintaining the nuclear systems. The administration also is putting more focus on upgrading the weapons.

President Barack Obama's final defense budget unveiled this month calls for a \$1.8 billion hike in nuclear arms spending to overhaul the country's aging nuclear bombers, missiles, submarines and other systems.

The president's \$19 billion request would allow the Pentagon and Energy Department to move toward a multiyear overhaul of the atomic arms infrastructure that is expected to cost \$320 billion over a decade and up to 1 trillion dollars over 30 years.

The nuclear spending boost is an ironic turn for a president who made reducing U.S. dependence on atomic weapons a centerpiece of his agenda during his first years in office.

Obama called for a world eventually free of nuclear arms in a speech in Prague and later reached a new strategic weapons treaty with Russia. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in part based on his stance on reducing atomic arms.

"He was going to de-emphasize the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security policy ... but in fact in the last few years he has emphasized new spending," said John Isaacs of the Council for a Livable World, an arms control advocacy group.

Critics say the Pentagon's plans are unaffordable and unnecessary because it intends to build a force capable of deploying the 1,550 warheads permitted under the New START treaty. But Obama has said the country could further reduce its deployed warheads by a third and still remain secure.

Hans Kristensen, an analyst at the Federation of American Scientists, said the Pentagon's costly "all-of-the-above" effort to rebuild all its nuclear systems was a "train wreck that everybody can see is coming." Kingston Reif of the Arms Control Association, said the plans were "divorced from reality."

The Pentagon could save billions by building a more modest force that would delay the new long-range bomber, cancel the new air launched cruise missile and construct fewer ballistic submarines, arms control advocates said.

Work said the Pentagon understood the financial problem. The department would need \$18 billion a year between 2021 and 2035 for its portion of the nuclear modernization, which is coming at the same time as a huge "bow wave" of spending on conventional ships and aircraft, he said.



"If it becomes clear that it's too expensive, then it's going to be up to our national leaders to debate" the issue, Work said, something that could take place during the next administration when spending pressures can no longer be ignored.

Reporting by David Alexander; Editing by Jonathan Oatis and John Stonestreet

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-defense-nuclear-idUSKCN0VZ02R>

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CNBC.com – New York, NY

North Korea's Arsenal Raises the Stakes for US Grid Security: Experts

By Javier E. David

Saturday, 20 February 2016

North Korea, the country whose nuclear ambitions have been the fulcrum of global security concerns for more than a decade, may be a threat in more ways than one.

Concerns about Pyongyang's nuclear arsenal have largely revolved around whether the country could eventually launch a warhead at neighboring South Korea, or even the United States itself. Yet the country's recent actions have converged with percolating fears about the U.S.'s antiquated power grid—which a growing number of observers say is vulnerable to asymmetric threats.

The possibility of an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attack—defined as the detonation of a nuclear device at high altitude that produces an electromagnetic wave that can either damage or destroy electronic systems—has been mooted since at least the Cold War, the Center for Security Policy notes, while solar flares can also trigger the same effect.

Yet it's the threat of a malicious attack on the more than 450,000 miles of high voltage transmission lines that comprise the U.S. power lattice that has some experts worried. It has been a generic concern in national security circles for years. However, North Korea's suspected test of a hydrogen bomb in late January—combined with its firing of a rocket just days ago—has fanned new EMP fears among observers who have warned about the issue for some time.

"The technology of building a super EMP weapon is understood and at least by circumstantial evidence...the North Koreans know how to do it," said Henry (Hank) Cooper, a director at the think tank Foundation for Resilient Societies and a former arms control official under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

Recent events suggest the power grid remains a prime target for terrorism, both at home and abroad. Within the last few months, both Israel and Ukraine were hit with crippling hacks against their respective power grids. Separately, a mysterious 2013 sniper attack on a Silicon Valley substation is widely suspected to have been the result of terrorism.

The possibility of a sophisticated attack on the energy grid "is real and needs to be addressed urgently," James Woolsey, chairman of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, told CNBC in a 2014 interview. Woolsey is a Democrat who was CIA Director under President Clinton and a Navy official under former President Carter.

Knowledge about the extent of North Korea's arsenal is notoriously opaque, which is one reason why January's nuclear test was met with skepticism by U.S. officials. Cooper, however, insisted that "there is no good reason" to dismiss the idea that the totalitarian regime may in fact be prepping an EMP.



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Last month's nuclear test "is disputed on the basis of it not creating a big seismic signal...but that's not true," said Cooper, a trained mechanical engineer. Calling it an "essential threat," Cooper argued that a low-yield hydrogen weapon can be used to produce the conditions that can trigger an EMP attack.

Knowledgeable observers warn that that an EMP detonation is more than just abstract theory or science fiction. Late last year, veteran broadcaster Ted Koppel released a book, "Lights Out," in which he warned an attack on the power grid was a legitimate possibility.

The White House released a contingency plan in October for a theoretical electromagnetic space storm that could disrupt the grid. Separately, federal regulators have also cautioned that EMP events are difficult to anticipate, and could "interrupt power to as many as 130 million people in the United States alone, requiring several years to recover."

'7 on a scale of 1-10'

At a minimum, the U.S. government has tacitly acknowledged the potential of such an attack or incident. Last May, the North American Aerospace Command (NORAD) announced plans to revive its Cheyenne Mountain Complex, an emblem of the country's Cold War posture. In announcing the move at the time, NORAD officials cited the need to defend the country from an EMP attack.

A successful attack could potentially devastate the domestic economy, causing more than \$2 trillion in economic damage, according to a "back of the envelope" December 2015 estimate by The Sage Policy Group, a consulting firm.

Vincent DeVito, a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Energy under President George W. Bush and who is now a law partner at Bowditch & Dewey, told CNBC that on a scale of 1 to 10, he classified the threat posed by an EMP attack as a 7.

"It's all exposed...and it's not just the U.S.," said DeVito. "We're interconnected with Canada and Mexico, so it's really a North America issue."

A 2014 drill by regulators determined that utilities were unprepared for electronic and physical attacks on the power grid, but since then utilities have been more proactive about fortifying their defenses, DeVito said.

"They're motivated to make the investments, just like airlines are to protect their jets. But without a strong government focus and geopolitical policy to address what these potential threats are," the grid remains a target, he said.

Utilities have been proactive about fortifying the grid on their own, DeVito said, but they require concentrated efforts by the government. Congress's EMP Commission, which disbanded in 2008, estimated a plan to protect the grid from attacks could be put together within five years, at a cost \$10-20 billion.

"Congress can fund [EMP defenses], but it's all about prioritizing," DeVito said.

<http://www.cnbc.com/2016/02/20/north-koreas-arsenal-raises-the-stakes-for-us-grid-security-experts.html>

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The China Post – Taipei, Taiwan

Nation Won't Develop Nuclear Weapons, Says Nat'l Defense Ministry

China News Agency (CAN)

February 22, 2016

TAIPEI--Taiwan will continue to maintain its stance of not developing or storing nuclear weapons, the Ministry of National Defense (MND) said Sunday, in response to a U.S. magazine article that revealed Taiwan's efforts to acquire such weapons in the 1970s.

"Taiwan has clearly declared that its military will act in accordance with international conventions and government policies, and will not produce, develop, acquire, store or use nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. That stance will not change," the MND said in a statement.

It was responding to an article published by The Diplomat on Saturday that revealed the U.S.' attempts to stop Taiwan from acquiring advanced nuclear technology in the 1970s, citing declassified documents released by the U.S. government.

According to the article, Taiwan entered into an agreement with the United States in 1976 that it would not develop facilities to reprocess spent fuel, after the International Atomic Energy Agency discovered Taiwan's attempts to produce weapons-grade plutonium and enrich uranium.

Taiwan was later discovered to have violated the agreement, prompting a warning from U.S. President Jimmy Carter that if Taiwan continued its efforts, Washington could no longer "continue supporting nuclear export licenses for (Taiwan's) power program," according to the article.

The article said Taiwan's interest in acquiring nuclear weapons increased after China acquired such weapons in the 1960s, but the U.S. worried that Taiwan's move would escalate tensions across the Taiwan Strait.

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2016/02/22/458914/Nation-wont.htm>

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The Australian – Sydney, Australia

Xi Push to Remove Rivals and Rule China for Life as 'Another Mao'

Michael Sheridan

The Times

February 22, 2016

China is moving towards one-man rule as the state media step up demands for loyalty to President Xi Jinping, a departure from the Communist Party's collective leadership of recent decades.

Last week the party's flagship newspaper issued a call for Mr Xi to have the power to "remake the political landscape of China". The article, supposedly written by one of a literary group, was put out on a social media account run by the *People's Daily*. It said all communists must be loyal to Mr Xi and "line up with the leadership".

The campaign to enshrine Mr Xi as the infallible "core" of authority is worrying many inside the political elite and coincides with China exerting its military muscle and possibly preparing to change its nuclear weapons strategy.

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The People's Liberation Army has just stationed surface-to-air missiles on a disputed island in the South China Sea. The Chinese expansion comes as Barack Obama rallies Asian nations to support free navigation in the strategic waterway. The prospect of one man dominating the party, the state and the army in China could be the most challenging test in the next US President's in-tray.

Mr Xi's grand plans include a total reorganisation of the Chinese military command structure that has included an internal debate about its nuclear weapons. Mr Xi recently formed a dedicated PLA rocket force to control the nuclear ballistic missile arsenal. A report for the Union of Concerned Scientists, a US-based group, says China may be considering placing its nuclear forces on alert, which means that, like America and Britain, its weapons would be ready to fire on command.

That would be a shift of position for a nation that affirms it will not be the first to use nuclear weapons in any conflict. China has already started an ambitious program to upgrade its older missiles with multiple warheads like those of other nuclear powers. Rising military budgets show that despite the slower Chinese economy and big flows of capital out of the country, Mr Xi is seizing any initiative to turn nationalism to his advantage. A source who grew up in the party's privileged compounds in Beijing said the moves harked back to another era: "There is a fear among the families, the long-time party members for generations, that this guy wants to make himself into another Chairman Mao and rule for life."

Like Mao, Mr Xi, 62, is using articles and essays in state media, often written by pseudonymous authors or published in the provinces, to intimidate enemies and promote himself.

Last week a social media platform controlled by the *Beijing Daily*, the voice of the capital's municipal committee, launched a striking attack on a party faction opposed to Mr Xi, the Communist Youth League. Officials connected to the league were "ambitious aristocrats whose self-serving attitude did no good to the party and led to scandals", it sneered.

Targeting the league — whose members include Prime Minister Li Keqiang and former president Hu Jintao — is a signal that Mr Xi has broken with the consensus set after the unrest of 1989 that the party's factions do not attack one another in public. A league connection — once a fast-track to promotion for young high-flyers — now seems to be a liability.

A study by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection — the party watchdog unleashed by Mr Xi against rivals accused of corruption — has criticised the "mentality" of league members. The commission's propaganda publication, the China Discipline Inspection Paper, warned against "those who form their own circles inside the party" and referred to fallen officials as "gangs".

This Mao-era language singled out the "petroleum gang" under the purged security chief, Zhou Yongkang, whose cronies dominated the Chinese oil industry, and the "secretary gang" around Ling Jihua, a close aide to Mr Hu and a former league stalwart. Mr Ling is already under arrest on corruption and bribery charges.

Defining people as members of "gangs" or "cliques" is a classic tactic of communist in-fighting and a prelude to destroying them.

Chilled by the signals from the top, half the provincial party chiefs in the country this month pledged allegiance to Mr Xi as "the core".

The term represents a significant change from the language used about Mr Xi's predecessors, Mr Hu and Jiang Zemin, who were referred to as being only "at the core" of a collective leadership.



The last strongman in China, Deng Xiaoping, exercised his power behind the scenes and scorned a cult of personality.

But Mr Xi, like Mao, inspires absurd displays of sycophancy, such as an ode to “Big Brother” written by Pu Liye — a deputy editor at Xinhua who writes under the pen name Pu Zhuozi — to mark Mr Xi’s visit to the news agency office on Friday. The poem drew widespread ridicule online.

It all points to a showdown next year at the party’s 19th congress. The 25-member politburo will be shaken up, and five out of the seven posts on China’s supreme ruling body, the politburo standing committee, will be vacated. That is when Mr Xi means to make his power complete.

According to Jeffrey Bader, who handled China policy for the Obama administration from 2009 to 2011, the verdict is open on whether China under Mr Xi will be a “revisionist” power that challenges the US in the Pacific.

In a paper for the Brookings Institution in Washington, Mr Bader wrote that China would “selectively adhere to international norms where they fit its interests and ignore or seek to change them where they do not”.

The *People’s Daily* recently provided a twist on the thinking behind the rivalry. It cited an ancient Greek historian to explain why China needed a strong leader, claiming that Beijing must avoid the “Thucydides trap”.

Thucydides, an Athenian general, wrote in his *History of the Peloponnesian War* that conflict between Athens and Sparta was inevitable because the Spartans feared the rising power of Athens. For Sparta, read America, for Athens, read China.

The Sunday Times

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/the-times/xi-push-to-remove-rivals-and-rule-china-for-life-as-another-mao/news-story/7d48cb29ff0e20c5cf4dd0083f9b9145>

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RT (Russia Today) – Moscow, Russia

US Rejected Peace Talks, Demanded Pyongyang’s Denuclearization before Latest Nuclear Test

22 February 2016

Washington has rejected reports claiming that the US was ready to drop Pyongyang’s denuclearization as a precondition for talks over a peace treaty to officially end the Korean War, and said the talks failed because of the North’s nuclear posturing.

The United States and North Korea held secret negotiations to end the 50-year-old conflict, a report by The Wall Street Journal claimed. Citing US officials, the publication said that the Obama administration was willing to drop its longstanding precondition that Pyongyang must first take steps to curtail its nuclear activities.

Instead the White House allegedly proposed that North Korea’s atomic weapons program should be dealt with as “*simply part of the talks.*” According to US officials familiar with the events, Pyongyang declined the proposal. Its nuclear test on January 6 ended the diplomatic effort to finally conclude the war that ended in 1953 with an armistice.



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Following the article by the WSJ, the State Department acknowledged the American negotiations with North Korea. However, it said that it was Pyongyang's initiative to hold discussions on the issue.

"To be clear, it was the North Koreans who proposed discussing a peace treaty. We carefully considered their proposal, and made clear that denuclearization had to be part of any such discussion," said spokesman John Kirby, adding the North rejected it. *"Our response to the North Korean proposal was consistent with our longstanding focus on denuclearization."*

After testing what the North called a miniature hydrogen bomb on January 6, ten days later, Pyongyang demanded the conclusion of a peace treaty with the US and a halt to US military exercises with South Korea.

In response the US Deputy Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, said that the North needs to demonstrate by its actions its serious about denuclearization before any dialogues could start. After that, on February 7, communist Korea fired a long-range rocket to place its communications satellite into orbit.

The story on negotiating a peace treaty deal continued on Thursday, when Washington rejected a Chinese proposal to start peace negotiations with North Korea alongside denuclearization talks.

"Denuclearization remains our top priority. We remain in close contact with the other five-party partners on our shared goal of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner," State Department spokeswoman Katina Adams said at the time.

That same Thursday Obama signed into law the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act, strengthening and expanding sanctions in response to the recent tests. On both occasions Pyongyang violated the UN Security Council resolutions banning it from launches that may be used as ballistic missile carrying nuclear warheads.

The Korean War in 1953 concluded with an armistice that was signed by the US, the North Korean military and the Chinese army. Pyongyang wants all three sides and South Korea to sign a treaty.

<https://www.rt.com/news/333212-korea-denuclearization-peace-talks/>

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Yonhap News Agency – Seoul, South Korea

S. Korea, U.S. Hold off THAAD Talks

February 23, 2016

SEOUL, Feb. 23 (Yonhap) -- South Korea and the United States have postponed the launch of formal talks on deploying a high-tech U.S. missile defense system, THAAD, on the peninsula amid speculation that the decision may be linked with efforts to adopt a U.N. resolution against Pyongyang as early as possible.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi plan to meet in Washington D.C. later this week.

China has vehemently opposed the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system on the peninsula, especially sensitive to its long-range radar.



South Korea and the U.S., however, expect China's cooperation in adopting what they call a "terminating" resolution on Pyongyang at the U.N. Security Council to punish the country for its recent nuclear test and long-range rocket launch.

Seoul and Washington had initially planned to sign the agreement on a joint working group's negotiations on the possible THAAD deployment.

The allies "decided to put off the signing of the terms of reference, which was originally slated for today," Moon Sang-gyun, spokesman at the Ministry of National Defense said.

They are "in the final stages" of preparations for signing the accord, Moon said, adding some details have yet to be ironed out. He said a deal would be possible within this week.

Seoul and Washington will then establish the working group to negotiate the sensitive THAAD issue, including cost-sharing, a candidate site and a specific timetable.

Hours after North Korea launched a long-range rocket carrying a satellite on Feb. 7, the allies announced plans to begin talks on bringing THAAD to the peninsula as part of efforts to counter North Korea's advancing nuclear and missile threats.

Seoul and like-minded countries denounced the February satellite launch as a cover for testing the communist country's intercontinental ballistic missile technology.

The allies' last-minute postponement on Tuesday came as Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is set to hold talks in Washington with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on the United Nations Security Council's punitive actions over North Korea's nuclear test in January and the recent long-range rocket launch.

Such timing raised speculation that Seoul and Washington may have decided to hold off on their discussion on the sensitive air defense system's deployment, having been mindful of China's protests.

The defense spokesman, however, dismissed those views, saying, "The U.N.'s sanctions on North Korea and the THAAD deployment are separate issues."

The out-of-the-blue decision also spawned conjectures that Seoul and Washington may have hit a snag in their negotiations.

"South Korea and the U.S. are not at odds, they are simply coordinating (positions) internally," said a defense ministry official, refuting the claims and asking not to be named.

Some sources noted the postponement was made at the request of Washington.

As the speculations spiraled, Lt. Gen. Thomas Vandal, commander of U.S. Forces Korea's Eighth Army, visited the defense ministry earlier in the day to clarify its position over the allegedly U.S.-proposed postponement.

"An on-going dialogue between USFK and the U.S. government has yet to be finalized," Vandal was quoted by the ministry as saying during the visit.

The terms of reference could be signed as early as Wednesday, but it could be delayed a little more, the commander said.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2016/02/23/0200000000AEN20160223003953315.html>

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USAF Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies (CUWS) Outreach Journal

The Dong-A Ilbo – Seoul, South Korea

'THAAD on S. Korea Could Be Destroyed in 1 Hour,' Claims China

February 23, 2016

The South Korean Defense Ministry said on Monday that Seoul and Washington will conduct the Tabletop Exercise (TTX) meant to counter North Korea's nuclear weapons at Vandenberg Air Force Base northwest of Los Angeles from Wednesday to Friday. The South Korean delegation is represented by Ryu Je-seung, head of the defense policy office at the Defense Ministry, while the U.S. is headed by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Elaine Bunn, with more than 40 officials from the defense and foreign affairs ministries from both countries in attendance.

Vandenberg Air Force Base is housing the ground ballistic interceptor (GBI), which is core weapons for the U.S. missile defense (MD) system, the ICBM for carrying nuclear warheads, and B-52 strategic bombers. "The U.S. will showcase for the first time measures for deterring proliferation (nuclear umbrella weaponry) including ICBM for carrying nuclear warheads, and GBI," a South Korean military source said.

According to the Hong Kong daily Ming Pao on Monday, the "Liberation" military newspaper, the official journal of the People's Liberation Army of China, reported the Chinese military could destroy within an hour the THAAD system deployed on the Korean Peninsula. The official CNR also recently reported, "If THAAD system in South Korea turns into the main target of the People's Liberation Army in the event of a situation on the Korean Peninsula, the Air Force's air-to-surface missile will be the ideal means to launch strike with."

Official Chinese media already reported that THAAD will become a target of the People's Liberation Army, but it is the first time that Chinese media outlets have directly singled out the target, and mentioned its prompt destruction.

<http://english.donga.com/List/3/all/26/526060/1>

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Global Times – Beijing, China

DPRK Warns to Use Strategic Weapons against US-S. Korean Forces

Source: *Xinhua*

February 23, 2016

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) said Tuesday that its strategic and tactical weapons are ready to be used for preemptive strikes on South Korea and the United States even if any "small movements" were found among US-S.Korean special forces, the official KCNA news agency said Tuesday.

The first target of the attacks would be Chongwadae, South Korea's presidential office, as well as South Korean authorities, said the KCNA, citing a statement issued by the supreme command of the Korean People's Army (KPA).

If the US-S.Korean armed forces continued to make military provocations despite warnings from the DPRK, the KPA would enter the phase of its second round of attacks, which would target US bases in the Asia-Pacific and even US territories, the statement warned.

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<https://cuws.au.af.mil> \ https://twitter.com/USAF_CUWS

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The DPRK is accusing the United States and South Korea of attempting to bring about a "collapse of the DPRK social system," read the statement.

The US-South Korea OPLAN 5015 war plan reportedly includes preemptive strikes on the DPRK and plans to remove the DPRK's weapons of mass destruction.

The "beheading operation," which targets the "supreme headquarters of the DPRK," means a preemptive strike for "removing in advance the one empowered with the mandate of order" to deter the "use" of the DPRK's nuclear and strategic weapons, the statement said.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/970069.shtml>

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NK News.org – Washington, D.C.

N.Korea Claims Satellite Launch Cost \$1.5 Billion: State Media

Estimate comes from a report issued by the North's Korean Economic Cooperation Council

By Ha-young Choi

February 23rd, 2016

North claimed it spends \$1.5 billion on a satellite launch, in a report written by Jeong Gang Chol from the North's Economic Cooperation Council published on Tuesday.

The piece argues that profits from the Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC) have been used to develop nuclear weapons and improve missile technology is an "embarrassing" distortion.

The report struck back at the South Korean government claims that revenue from the KIC was diverted to weapons programs, saying the time of the first satellite launch was conducted in 1998, two years before the opening of the KIC.

"Our underground nuclear test was conducted in October 2006, and the first product from the KIC was made in December 2006, following the building dedication ceremony in June 2004," the article reads.

It also compares the \$1.5 billion figure to profits from the KIC totalling less than \$100 million per year. The salary paid to North Korean workers aligned with the statistics provided by the Ministry of Unification: \$100 million last year.

There has been a range of speculation regarding North Korea's expenditures on the launch, considered a cover for the North's test of its long-range missile technology, however expert estimates generally tend to be lower than the figure presented by the North's media.

"It was an exceptional case for the North Korean media to unveil the amount of money used for the satellite launch," Lee Sang-min, researcher from Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, told *NK News*.

Kim Dong-yup, professor at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies, indicated that it is difficult to judge North Korea's input for the nuclear program and satellite launch due to the different value of currencies and difficulty in calculating labor power.

"Therefore, it is meaningless to pin down whether the profit from the KIC was used for nuclear and satellite. The scale of the facilities and resources calculated by government organizations and institutions vary," Kim told *NK News*.



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"Experts generally assume approximately \$243 million for one nuclear test, but it difficult to suggest an exact amount," Suh Kune-yull, professor at the Department of Nuclear Engineering at Seoul National University, told *NK News*.

The cost for satellite launch seems similar. "(About) \$225 million is the average price to launch a satellite," Martyn Williams of North Korea Tech told *NK News*, citing major commercial launch provider ULA.

Williams assumed that the added cost due to North Korea's under-developed technology could be offset by the government's exclusive initiatives and the non-commercial purpose of the satellite.

The South Korean Ministry of Defense has no updated figures on the issue. In 2012, an official from the ministry estimated that \$840 million had been earmarked for ballistic missile development.

Former North Korean leader Kim Jong Il also gave lower a number back in 2000.

"It costs \$200-300 million per rocket launch," Kim said, adding approximately \$900 million is needed for two or three satellite launches per year.

As for last year, the total amount of revenue flowing into the KIC amounted to \$540 million, while \$520 million was paid during the conservative administration from President Lee Myung-bak to Park Geun-hye, according to a lawmaker Lee Hae-chan of the opposition Minjoo Party.

Experts generally guessed that about 30 percent of the profits go to the regime, which is equivalent to \$162 million over the nine year period.

Previously, President Park Geun-hye said funds from the KIC were delivered to the leadership of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), last week during the speech at the National Assembly.

Minister of Unification Hong Yong-pyo asserted that 60-70 percent of profits from the complex were offered to the WPK's secretary and Office 39, the department in charge of acquiring foreign currency, on February 14.

One day later, Hong altered his position, citing a lack of evidence, even though that remark was revised by the ministry's official press release.

North Korea's criticism against Park and international pressure has been running high since last weekend. Uriminzokkiri devoted 10 pages, equivalent to 1,300 words, to character assassination towards the South Korean President last Sunday.

Seoul's Ministry of Unification distributed a press release on the same day, calling for ceasing the groundless slander.

<https://www.nknews.org/2016/02/n-korea-claims-satellite-launch-cost-1-5-billion-state-media/>

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The Korea Herald – Seoul, South Korea

Kerry: THAAD Not Necessary if N. Korea Is Denuclearized

February 24, 2016

The only reason for the United States and South Korea to consider deploying the THAAD missile defense system is because of North Korean threats, and the system won't be necessary if the communist nation is denuclearized, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said Tuesday.

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United States Air Force Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies | Maxwell AFB, Alabama

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"We have made it very clear that we are not hungry or anxious to deploy THAAD," Kerry said during a joint news conference after talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

"The only reason for THAAD being in consultation ... is because of the provocative actions of North Korea, which has publicly announced it is focused on the United States and which is developing weapons which have the ability to attack the United States," he said.

Kerry also said, "If we can get to denuclearization, there is no need to deploy THAAD."

"We've stated publicly, openly and clearly what the conditions are for not having to consider its deployment. And that would be the denuclearization. That's all. Not even if North Korea fundamentally changed, but if it is denuclearized, then this particular threat goes away," he said.

Kerry also stressed the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) is a purely defensive mechanism. The only way to not only prevent THAAD from being deployed but also see less American troops on the Korean Peninsula is to resolve the nuclear issue and make peace on the peninsula, he said.

These remarks appear to underscore the point that THAAD is not aimed at China. But they can also be seen as leaving open the possibility of the U.S. reversing its decision on THAAD in an effort to encourage China to play greater roles in reining in Pyongyang.

Shortly after the North's missile launch on Feb. 7, South Korea and the U.S. jointly announced they would begin official discussions on the possible placement of the U.S.' THAAD missile defense system in South Korea.

That ended more than a year of Seoul's soul-searching over how to deal with the issue amid Washington's desire to deploy the system and China's intense opposition to it. The North's twin provocations of its fourth nuclear test on Jan. 6 and then a missile test a month later gave Seoul justification for the decision.

China has protested the decision as it has long claimed THAAD can be used against it, despite repeated assurances from Washington that the system is aimed only at deterring North Korean threats. (Yonhap)

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20160224000363>

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Yonhap News Agency – Seoul, South Korea

S. Korea Dismisses China's Concern over THAAD

By Lee Chi-dong

February 24, 2016

SEOUL, Feb. 24 (Yonhap) -- South Korea's presidential office expressed displeasure Wednesday at China's ferocious opposition to its push for the deployment of THAAD, a U.S. missile defense system, here.

It is a matter of "self-defense" against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, Cheong Wa Dae spokesman Jeong Yeon-guk told reporters.

He was responding to increased public pressure from China over the THAAD issue.

Beijing's top envoy in Seoul warned Tuesday that bilateral ties will be destroyed "in an instant" if the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system is positioned on the peninsula.

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In a meeting with Kim Jong-in, head of the main opposition Minjoo Party of Korea, Ambassador Qiu Guohong was also quoted as saying South Korea's own national security may be jeopardized as well.

He even argued the THAAD issue has slowed consultations in the U.N. Security Council on additional sanctions.

Qiu's remarks, quite unusual for a senior diplomat, were seen by many as Beijing putting explicit pressure on Seoul.

China views a THAAD unit in Korea as targeting not only North Korea but also China. It is especially concerned about its high-powered radar.

The Cheong Wa Dae official stressed that it is a self-defense measure for South Korea to allow the U.S. Forces Korea to deploy THAAD in the country. He cited the North's growing military threats.

"It's a matter to be decided in accordance with security and national interests, and China will have to recognize the point," Jeong said.

In a separate statement, South Korea's Foreign Ministry emphasized that North Korea is the fundamental reason for considering THAAD on its soil.

"If (China) raises the THAAD deployment issue, it would be reasonable to take a look first at why the matter has occurred," it said.

It also said the THAAD discussion and efforts to adopt a U.N. resolution are separate affairs.

"It's important for the two countries to make joint efforts on the basis of mutual trust," said the ministry.

The ministry also called in the ambassador to deliver a message of protest, an informed source said.

When meeting Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Hong-kyun, Qiu gave a "sincere" explanation of the related situation, according to the ministry.

He also expressed an understanding about the "sensitivity" of the issue and said he would make more efforts towards the constant development of South Korea-China relations.

News reports of Qiu's wording sparked public criticism of him in South Korea.

Many pointed out he went too far. Some experts regarded it as a sort of blackmail.

"We can say that there was a problem with the choice of diplomatic rhetoric, words or way of expression," Kim Sung-han, a professor at Korea University said.

It's very "undiplomatic" to talk to the opposition party leader about a sensitive issue in such a manner at a time when South Korea campaigns to promote national unity on the security front, he added.

Kim Han-kwon, a professor at Korea National Diplomatic Academy, also said it was not appropriate for Qiu to act like that as an ambassador.

"The South Korean government seems to be waiting for China's answer to whether or not his comments reflect the Chinese government's official position," he said.

Bong Young-shik, a senior researcher at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, described the envoy's comments as de-facto blackmail that China would do something if South Korea embraces THAAD.



At issue is whether it's his personal view or Beijing's formal stance, added Bong.

In Washington, meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi held talks on North Korea and the THAAD issue.

They produced "significant" progress on the U.N. resolution but failed to narrow differences on the THAAD dispute.

Kerry said there would be no need to deploy THAAD on the peninsula should North Korea move to abandon its nuclear weapons program and stop its military threats.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2016/02/24/02000000000AEN20160224004855315.html>

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The Korea Times – Seoul, South Korea

THAAD is Not 'Bargaining Chip'

By Yi Whan-woo

February 26, 2016

A senior U.S. diplomat said Friday that the proposed deployment of an American missile system in South Korea is not "a bargaining chip" with China over tougher U.N. sanctions on North Korea for its nuclear test and long-range missile launch.

Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Russel dismissed allegations that the U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile system is a diplomatic bargaining chip in Washington's negotiations with Beijing over the North Korean issue and other security agendas in the region.

"There's no connection between what is going on in the diplomatic track in the U.N. Security Council and the question of the deployment of THAAD," Russel told reporters in Seoul. "THAAD is not a diplomatic bargaining chip."

Russel made the remarks after a meeting with Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se, Vice Foreign Minister Lim Sung-nam and Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Hong-kyun.

He visited Seoul to discuss issues related to a U.N. resolution on tougher sanctions against North Korea for its latest nuclear test and launch of a long-range rocket.

His visit came prior to a visit scheduled for Sunday by Wu Dawei, China's top nuclear envoy.

"This is a very important time to put our heads together and think about the way forward, particularly in implementing a new U.N. Security Council resolution once it's concluded," Russel told reporters upon arriving at Incheon International Airport.

Wu will meet his South Korean counterpart Hwang Joon-gook, the special representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs, and hold talks on resuming suspended dialogue on Pyongyang's denuclearization.

Diplomatic sources said that Russel and Wu are carrying their respective government's messages concerning the deployment of the THAAD battery, following the U.S.-China agreement on the draft U.N. resolution against the North.

The U.S. and China agreed on the U.N. bill, Thursday, aimed at imposing unprecedented levels of sanctions on North Korea. It awaits the U.N Security Council's approval.



USAF Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies (CUWS) Outreach Journal

Washington has seemed to argue that setting up a THAAD battery here would be inevitable if Beijing refused to punish Pyongyang and draft the U.N. bill accordingly.

China has protested against a plan by South Korean and U.S. military officials to begin working-level discussions against setting up the THAAD battery.

Beijing suspects that THAAD's long-range radar could be used to spy on its military activities while Seoul and Washington argue the primary purpose of the U.S. missile defense system is to deter North Korean attacks.

"It's likely Seoul, Washington and Beijing will comprehensively consider their respective interests on the security of the Korean Peninsula, including THAAD and the U.N. resolution against Pyongyang," a diplomatic source said.

He speculated that Beijing will ask Seoul to consider peace talks to officially end the 1950-53 Korean War in return for China's support in punishing Pyongyang.

The talks have been repeatedly proposed by the Kim Jong-un regime; but both Seoul and Washington suspect that the North could use the talks as a ploy to demand that the U.S. withdraw its troops from South Korea, without scrapping its nuclear weapons program.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/02/485_199135.html

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Tasnim News Agency – Tehran, Iran

No Direct Restrictions on Military Cooperation with Iran: Russia

February 21, 2016

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said UN Resolution 2231 does not prohibit arms sales to Iran, stressing that Moscow sees no direct limit on expansion of its arms and military cooperation with Iran.

"It is alleged that a ban on delivery of weapons and military equipment to Iran imposed by the UN Security Council is still in effect and that this arms embargo has been imposed by Resolution 2231 of the UN Security Council passed in support of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). This is not true," Zakharova told the Tass news agency on Saturday.

"Resolution 2231 provides for the permission-based procedure of supplying military products to Iran by obtaining consent of the UN Security Council. This rule is set for the period until 2020," she added.

Stressing that Moscow will act in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 in the sphere of military-technical cooperation with Iran, Zakharova said, "On our part, we, in our cooperation with Iranian partners, will act in strict accordance with the set procedure, including, of course, the UN Security Council resolution (2231)."

On Wednesday, Russian media reported that Moscow will this year sign a contract to sell a batch of its Sukhoi Su-30SM multi-role fighters to Iran.

One day later, US State Department Spokesman Mark Toner reacted to Russia's decision and said "UN Security Council Resolution 2231 prohibits the sale to Iran of specified categories of



conventional arms ... without approval in advance on a case-by-case basis by the UN Security Council."

Toner said all UN members, and especially those such as Russia that negotiated the resolution as part of the nuclear deal, "should be fully aware of these restrictions."

Tehran and the Group 5+1 (Russia, China, the US, Britain, France and Germany) on July 14, 2015 finalized a comprehensive deal on Tehran's nuclear program and implemented it on January 16.

The comprehensive nuclear deal, the JCPOA, terminated all nuclear-related sanctions on Iran after coming into force.

<http://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2016/02/21/1007214/no-direct-restrictions-on-military-cooperation-with-iran-russia>

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Herald Scotland – Glasgow, Scotland, U.K.

Russian Subs in North Sea Not a Justification for Trident, Says Emily Thornberry

By Kate Devlin, UK Political Correspondent

Monday, 22 February 2016

The sight of Russian submarines in the North Sea is "deeply unsettling" but does not justify replacing Trident, the shadow defence secretary has said.

Emily Thornberry warned that a decision on the ageing nuclear weapons system should be based solely on pragmatism.

She also called on the Minister of Defence to use only British steel in UK defence projects.

She warned that no country could be sure of its ability to protect itself without a steel industry.

But she would not commit Labour to the Conservative pledge to spend two per cent of GDP on defence.

The Islington MP got the job earlier this year after Jeremy Corbyn sacked the pro-Trident Maria Eagle.

She has already faced intense criticism from Labour MPs amid accusations that a review into Trident and other defence issues is a 'stitch up'.

Ms Thornberry told an invited audience at the Royal United Services Institute (Rusi) defence think tank that sabre rattling about Russia was not enough to justify Trident renewal.

She admitted: "Events in Georgia and in Crimea have shown Putin's interest in expanding Russia's sphere of influence, and his willingness to use military force in order to do so."

"The images we see whether of Russian jets off the coast of Cornwall or of submarines in the North Sea can be deeply unsettling," she added.

But, she said, it was "incumbent on all of us, I think, to try to look at this issue from a pragmatic point of view rather than an ideological one".

She said that politicians had to ask if the cost of four new Trident submarines, more than the Ministry of Defence's Budget for a year, would prove "sufficient value for money in the long term, especially if it has to come at the expense of other crucial investments in our defences".



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Serious questions had to be asked about whether the nuclear deterrent could be 'future-proofed' for advances in technology over the next 20 or 30 years.

Asked whether her policy review would commit to meeting the Nato two per cent defence spending target, she said: "I can't say at the moment, I'm afraid."

On steel, she said: "I am really struck, against the background of the in/out referendum on Europe, how defence spending is not an area that is captured by any form of European competition law.

"So it is open to us, as part of an active industrial strategy, to ensure that where we spend British money it not only helps our defence but it gives the maximum number of British jobs.

"That doesn't just mean in terms of where various things are built, it also means buying British steel.

"I do think that as part of the security of the country we should start with the idea that in order for us to retain our sovereignty we ought to be able to build our own kit with our own industry.

"We cannot as a country feel confident about our ability to defend ourselves if we don't have a steel industry."

Earlier this month Scottish steel workers took part in a protest in Brussels calling for more support for the industry.

David Cameron has also faced calls to do more to tackle Chinese steel allegedly being "dumped" across Europe.

In October, Tata Steel announced 1,200 jobs were to go across the UK, almost 300 of them in Scotland.

http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/14293756.Russian_subs_in_North_Sea_not_a_justification_for_Trident_says_Emily_Thornberry/

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Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) – Tehran, Iran

20 February 2016

Rosatom: Construction of Bushehr II, III N. Power Plants to Start

Moscow, Feb 19, IRNA -- Head of Russia's Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation Sergey Kiriyenko announced on Friday that his company will start building two more nuclear power plants in Bushehr province in Southern Iran in the coming weeks.

'We have set the date for construction of two new nuclear plants in Bushehr with our Iranian partners,' Kiriyenko said on Friday.

He underlined that Russia and Iran have signed an important agreement on construction of three nuclear power plants in Bushehr province.

'We have also signed an agreement for construction of eight nuclear power plants for Iran,' Kiriyenko added.

In March 2014, Rosatom and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) reached an agreement to construct at least two more nuclear power plants in Bushehr.

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On November 11, 2014, Iran and Russia signed a deal to build up two new nuclear reactors on the site of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant.

In December, AEOI Deputy Chief and Spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi announced that Iran has started building two new nuclear power plants in the Southern province of Bushehr.

'We have entered the executive phase of the construction of these two nuclear power plants based on the contract signed between Tehran and Moscow in March to construct the plants,' Kamalvandi said.

Judging the information released by the two sides so far, it seems that Russia will be in charge of building two more reactors for the development of Bushehr power plant, and Iran will build the needed facilities.

Salehi has on different occasions announced that Iran is ready to continue its mutual cooperation with Russia in peaceful nuclear energy.

The Islamic Republic signed the Bushehr contract with Russia in 1995 and the nuclear power plant reached its full capacity by August 2012. It is located about 18 kilometers South of the provincial capital.

The original plan of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant included three phases of development. According to the plan Bushehr should have three power plants each with a 1000MW power-generation capacity.

According to Iran's 20-year vision plan, the country should have enough nuclear plants to produce 20,000MW of nuclear-generated power by 2025.

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/81970820/>

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FARS News Agency – Tehran, Iran

Sunday, February 21, 2016

Top Commander: IRGC to Test New Military Hardware in Massive Drills

TEHRAN (FNA) - Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Hassan Firouzabadi said the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) plans to test its recently developed weapons and military equipment in the upcoming wargames.

"The large-scale drills will be staged within the framework of the Armed Forces' stated goals: training, testing and using new products," Firouzabadi told reporters in Tehran on Sunday.

He said that the defense ministry tests its weapons and equipment in advance as part of a routine training cycle designed to improve defense.

Elaborating on the IRGC drills, Firouzabadi said the exercises are meant to improve cooperation and coordination, prepare the Armed Forces for any possible attack, and contribute to their qualitative military edge.

Earlier this month, Firouzabadi announced plans by the IRGC to hold missile drills in the final days of February.

"The IRGC missile wargames have been communicated to be staged in the first half of (the Iranian month of) Esfand (February 11-March 5)," Firouzabadi said.



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"Testing and evaluating precision-striking capabilities and power, increasing the Armed Forces' preparedness, and strengthening the missile deterrence power are among the main goals of the drills," he added.

Iranian Armed Forces recently test-fired different types of newly-developed missiles and torpedoes and tested a large number of home-made weapons, tools and equipment, including submarines, military ships, artillery, choppers, aircrafts, UAVs and air defense and electronic systems, during massive military drills.

Defense analysts and military observers say that Iran's wargames and its advancements in weapons production have proved as a deterrent factor.

The officials have always underscored that the country's defense program cannot be affected by the nuclear deal clinched between Iran and the world powers on July 14 and the UN Security Council resolutions.

On October 11, Iran successfully test-fired the country's new precision-guided long-range ballistic missile that can be controlled until the moment of impact. Emad carries a conventional warhead.

"This missile (Emad) which has been fully designed and made by Iranian Defense Ministry's scientists and experts is the country's first long-range missile with navigation and strike controlling capability; it is capable of hitting and destroying the targets with high-precision," Defense Minister Brigadier General Hossein Dehqan told reporters after the successful test of Emad missile.

The Iranian Defense Minister reiterated that the manufacture and successful testing of Emad missile is a technological and operational jump in a strategic field, and said, "We don't ask for anyone's permission for boosting our defense and missile power; we resolutely continue our defense programs, specially in the missile field, and Emad missile is a conspicuous example."

General Dehqan felicitated Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Armed Forces and nation on the successful testing, and appreciated the scientists and experts of the Aerospace Industries Organization of the Defense Ministry.

The Iranian Defense Minister reiterated that the mass production and delivery of Emad missile to the country's Armed Forces will considerably increase their power and tactical capabilities.

IRGC Lieutenant Commander Brigadier General Hossein Salami announced in December that the IRGC operational units had been supplied with Emad missile.

"Emad missile systems were delivered to the IRGC operational units," Salami told FNA.

He also said the missile will likely be used in the upcoming wargames.

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13941202000816>

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Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) – Tehran, Iran

24 February 2016

Iran Getting Less than \$50 Billion in Cash after Nuclear Deal: Kerry

Tehran, Feb 24, IRNA – U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Tuesday that the amount of cash Iran will receive due to the implementation of the nuclear agreement is below the \$50 billion level.

'It's below the \$50 billion (level),' he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, when he was asked about varying reports about how much money Iran would receive, according to news agency reports.

Iran gained access to about \$100 billion in frozen assets when an international nuclear agreement was implemented last month, but much of it already was tied up because of debts and other commitments. Earlier reports had said Tehran would receive as much as \$150 billion.

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/81976596/>

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Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) – Tehran, Iran

25 February 2016

Envoy: IAEA to Release Report on Implementation of JCPOA on Friday

Vienna, Feb 25, IRNA – Iran's Ambassador to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said that the first seasonal report of the agency concerning implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) for Board of Governors will be possibly published on Friday.

Reza Najafi, also Iran's permanent Representative to the United Nations Headquarters in Vienna, told reporters here on Thursday that it is predicted the agency declares verification of implementation of JCPOA will continue, like its report on January 16, 2016.

Iran and the G5+1 signed a final nuclear agreement in Vienna on July 14. Under the accord, Iran will limit development of certain aspects of its nuclear activities in exchange for, among other things, the removal of all nuclear-related economic and financial bans against the Islamic Republic.

On October 21, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei in a letter to President Rouhani specified a number of conditions for implementing the JCPOA agreed by Tehran and the world powers on July 14.

Ayatollah Khamenei started the letter by appreciating the Iranian team of negotiators, critics, parliamentarians and the media workers for their efforts to provide the public opinion with an almost complete image of the JCPOA, saying that these efforts ended up in highlighting the soft and strong points of the deal.

Then, he referred to the US administration's continued hostile approach towards Iran even after reaching the nuclear agreement, and said, 'The US president's remarks in two letters to me saying that he doesn't intend to overthrow the Islamic Republic were soon proved untrue by his support for seditious moves in Iran, financial support for the dissidents opposed to the Islamic Republic and his clear military threats – and even nuclear threats which can lead to filing a detailed lawsuit against him at the international courts- revealed the US leaders' real intention.'

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/81978985/>

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The Diplomat – Tokyo, Japan

India's Deadliest Sub Is Ready for Operations

The Indian Navy's INS Arihant could already be commissioned next month.

By Franz-Stefan Gady for *The Diplomat*

February 24, 2016

The Indian Navy's first indigenously developed ballistic missile nuclear submarine (SSBN), the INS *Arihant*, could be commissioned as early as next month, according to local media reports.

"It has passed all tests and in many things has surpassed our expectations. Technically the submarine can now be commissioned at any time," a senior defense official told *The Economic Times*.

The submarine has undergone extensive deep sea diving drills and weapons launch tests. During the various tests, conducted in utmost secrecy off the coast of Vishakhapatnam, the boomer has been accompanied by a Russian submarine rescue ship of Russia's Black Sea Fleet, the RFS *Epron*.

The Indian Navy currently does not possess a submarine rescue vessel and had to rely on Russian support to conduct the INS *Arihant's* sea and weapons trials. The first missile tests aboard the SSBN were conducted in October 2015.

The submarine will be armed with the K-4, an intermediate-range nuclear-capable submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) also under development by DRDO, with a range of up to 3,500 kilometers, as well as with the K-15 Sagarika SLBMs with a 700-750 kilometers range.

Both missiles can be armed with nuclear warheads. The sub has four vertical launch tubes, which can be armed with either four K-4 missiles or 12—three per launch tube—K-15 missiles.

Another missile, the 1,000 km-range subsonic tactical cruise missile Nirbhay, has also been test-fired in October 2015 for use on the sub. However, the test has only been partially successful.

As I noted back in October 2015:

Should the Nirbhay not receive operational clearance soon, the INS Arihant will face limitations as integral part of India's nuclear triad given the K-15's limited range, which would mean that the submarine would have to move closer to enemy shores to launch its missiles, making it vulnerable to detection.

The *Arihant* is the lead vessel of the Indian Navy's future fleet of four (some media reports say five) *Arihant*-class SSBNs. The shipyards at Vishakhapatnam have allegedly already started working on two more vessels of the class.

India's new submarines are based on the Russian Project 971 *Akula I*-class nuclear-powered attack boats. The *Arihant* itself will be a technological demonstrator, rather than a fully operational SSBN.

As I reported before, India's nuclear warfare policy is centered on a No First-Use (NFU) doctrine. As a result, New Delhi needs to field a credible second-strike capability. Yet, as of now, India keeps its nuclear warheads de-mated from the actual missiles.



However, in order for the new sub class to fulfill its role as the sea leg of India's nuclear triad, SLBMs with mounted nuclear warheads will need to be deployed on the boomers.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/02/indias-deadliest-sub-is-ready-for-operations/>

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The Guardian (U.S. Edition) – New York, NY

OPINION/Comment is Free

Labour's Trident Debate Needs to Be Based on Facts

The party's defence review will be worthless if decisions are made on the basis of fictions such as the risk of cyber attacks and the threat from underwater drones

By John Hutton and George Robertson

Monday, 22 February 2016

We are increasingly concerned that the Labour party's defence review is sliding into chaos and incoherence. We accept that there is a legitimate disagreement as to whether the United Kingdom requires an independent nuclear deterrent.

Given the increased prominence of nuclear weapons in the security policies of Russia, China and North Korea, the significant nuclear weapons building programmes occurring in those countries, and the strident brandishment of those weapons as official policies there, it is self-evident that a British nuclear deterrent will be essential to our security for decades to come.

We understand, of course, that there is another point of view, although we strongly disagree with it. But we do not accept as legitimate the use of spurious arguments and newly created "facts" to argue against the plan to continue the deterrent into the future by building four new ballistic-missile submarines.

The question of how to maintain a British nuclear deterrent into the mid-century has been studied exhaustively over the past 10 years. The Blair government conducted the original "deep dive" in 2006, resulting in a white paper, approved by parliament, recommending building new submarines. The coalition government, pressed by the Lib Dems, conducted an extremely detailed Trident Alternatives Review in 2013. The British-American Security Information Council (Basic) convened an extraordinary panel of independent all-party experts that made its report in 2014.

All these studies concluded that a deterrent carried by ballistic missile submarines provided the greatest deterrent capability at least cost.

To be clear, all other potential deterrent platforms were evaluated. Land-based missiles, land-based aircraft and carrier-based aircraft were rejected because of their lack of survivability, and, in the case of land-and-sea-based aircraft, their relatively short range. In addition the F-35s Britain is acquiring lack a nuclear weapons capability and the UK does not have an air-delivered nuclear weapon in its inventory. Equipping Astute-class attack submarines with cruise missiles appeared superficially attractive, until it was recognised that to fill this role the Astutes would need major (and very expensive) hull redesign to carry cruise missiles. A much larger than planned Astute force would be needed, as would the development, testing and production both of cruise missiles and a new warhead for them.

Trident submarines, on the other hand, are highly survivable and carry the existing Trident II missile, which we possess under a financially advantageous arrangement with the United States.



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The Trident II will carry the UK's current nuclear warheads. It is, therefore, a flight of fancy to suggest that a viable alternative to the existing submarine model exists.

All of this said, two new – and completely spurious – accusations have been raised by some involved in the Labour review intended to cast doubt on the continuous-at-sea option. The first is the contention that the submarines could be disabled by cyber attacks. To the degree a cyber threat exists, it applies to any deterrent platform (or, indeed, to any military system). But the Trident boats are uniquely resistant to cyber attack.

If the concern is the nuclear command and control system, the fact is that the UK's system is not connected to the internet (nor are there any plans to do so) and it is therefore impossible to introduce web-carried malware into it.

If the concern is the ship's operating system, once the submarine is submerged internet viruses can't enter the hull.

If the concern is cyber vulnerability while the submarine is pierside in Faslane, we can only assume that the operating system also will be "air-gapped" and that malware cannot be imported into it via the net.

That leaves sabotage, and we can only believe that every portal that provides entry into the operating system will be blocked or sealed to prevent the introduction of malware through the use of thumb drives or other such devices.

The second new concern that has been raised is that a new generation of underwater drones (or unmanned underwater vehicles - UUVs) will be able to seek out and destroy Trident submarines in the open ocean. UUVs, even future generations, will not have the range or sensors to conduct wide-area search. That means that they must be transported to the general area of the submarine by a mother ship or mother plane. In either case the submarine would hear the carrier platform enter the area, would hear the UUVs enter the water, and could take evasive action – just as it would if it detected a hostile submarine. All of this assumes, incorrectly, that the submarine has already been geo-located in a particular area, which brings us to the timeless question of the oceans turning transparent.

Every decade for at least the past 50 years predictions have been made that space-based or other non-acoustic sensors will turn the oceans "transparent", thereby rendering submarines of all types vulnerable to detection, location and attack. Physics is a tough master however, and the oceans remain opaque. While we cannot rule out an eventual breakthrough, we are confident that the Successor class of Trident subs will be able to hide in the deep ocean, providing Britain with a powerful, invisible, secure and invulnerable deterrent for many years to come.

Lord Robertson of Port Ellen and Lord Hutton of Furness are both former secretaries of state for defence. Lord Robertson was also secretary general of Nato.

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/feb/22/labour-trident-defence-review-facts-cyber-attacks-underwater-drones>

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OPINION/Defense in Depth

As China's Military Modernizes, Woody Island Deployments Are Just the Beginning

By Lauren Dickey
February 22, 2016

China continued to make waves in the South China Sea last week with its deployment of surface-to-air missile launchers and a radar system on the contested Woody Island. While this development undoubtedly challenges both the claims of littoral states and the U.S. regional presence, China's actions should be thought of as part of a much broader agenda aimed at modernizing the capabilities and operations of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Beyond China's posturing lies an important process of structural and organizational reforms that will shape the war-fighting capabilities of the PLA for the decade ahead. While a lot remains unknown, President Xi Jinping's planned comprehensive reforms of the PLA appear to target the development of a leaner, stronger Chinese fighting force, an enhanced power projection capability, and an even greater focus on deterring threats along the periphery.

Xi's planned reforms are another iteration of similar cycles of military reforms China has experienced since its founding in 1949, each cycle with roughly a fifteen-year lifespan. Onlookers have long called for reorganization but were largely uncertain as to when such changes would occur, particularly given that the last major reform to the PLA took place at the turn of the millennium when the Maoist People's War doctrine was exchanged in favor of a localized high-tech war strategic paradigm. In late 2013, Xi began his own cycle of reforms with initial moves to optimize the PLA structure, improve the balance between China's armed forces, and reduce the number of non-combat personnel. More importantly, a foundation for a Western-style command and control network emerged: Xi created a joint operations command authority under the Central Military Commission (CMC) and a theater joint operational command system.

The more robust announcements, however, accompanied the September 2015 military parade. From the rostrum at Tiananmen Square, Xi announced a reduction of PLA active duty forces to 2 million by the end of 2017. Subsequent coverage has since highlighted that the personnel cuts focus on troops with outdated armaments, non-combat personnel, and administrative staff. Just a few months later, last November, Xi announced that the seven existing military area commands would be regrouped into five new battle zone commands. Marking significant progress in setting up a joint battle command system, we now know that the reforms will see the PLA operating separately from eastern, western, southern, northern, and central theater commands, avoiding opacity and ineffective command systems that plagued the old seven zone structure.

The first few months of 2016 have continued Xi's historic steps in reforming the PLA. A PLA Ground Forces (PLAGF), Rocket Force (PLARF), and Strategic Support Forces (SSF) have been inaugurated. The creation of the PLAGF reflects a bureaucratic shake-up; prior to Xi's reforms, the general departments that ran the PLA also led the ground forces, creating an inherent bias toward the army. Now, in what can be thought of as a demotion of sorts, the PLAGF will act as their own service, entirely separate from the general departments.

By contrast, the creation of the PLA Rocket Force is a huge promotion for the former Second Artillery Corps, the nuclear and conventional missile force of the Chinese military. Now equal to other branches of the armed services, an increased role for the PLARF in the Chinese military establishment writ large signals an intent to further develop Chinese medium- and long-range missile capabilities, a not-so-subtle signal aimed at perceived threats from the United States. It is a necessary upgrade to China's deterrent capabilities and represents the prominence the military will

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continue to give to anti-access area denial (A2/AD) strategy. Boosting the PLARF's role also means that these troops get both their own uniforms and their own patriotic, missile-laden music video, not to mention the likely responsibility for the new missile outpost on Woody Island.

While still shrouded in secrecy, semi-official sources suggest that the SSF will fuse space, cyber, and electronic warfare forces into one cohesive unit. Song Zhongping, a Chinese military theorist, has suggested that the PLA will use the SSF to meet the challenges of both traditional and modern, high-tech warfare by combining hacking, satellite reconnaissance and navigation, and attacks targeting communication channels. Acting as a strategic deterrent in the cyber, space, and nuclear realms, the SSF is intended to strike at one of the most vulnerable points of modern militaries: communication networks. An ability to simultaneously deny access to space, cyber, and the electromagnetic spectrum would pose a formidable and credible deterrent threat not even Washington may be ready to overcome.

Most importantly, the reorganization requires all branches—new and old—of the Chinese armed forces to come under a joint military command. As a retired Chinese colonel opined, the transition to a U.S.-style joint command structure will transform the PLA into a specialized, modern armed force punching above its weight around the world. The CMC, headed by Xi, will slim down to fifteen functional departments, commissions and offices. Even under a leaner joint command structure, however, let's not forget that the Chinese military is ultimately tasked with serving the Communist Party of China, rather than the Chinese people. As such, another important element of the reforms has been for Xi to reassert the CCP's grip over the troops, insisting that troops and military media outlets alike must continue to reaffirm the Party's legitimacy to rule.

To be certain, a lot remains unknown about the breadth and depth of Xi's planned reforms for the Chinese military. His reforms have not yet addressed other persistent problems in the PLA, including the professionalization of the troops and the reorganization of the general departments. What is certain, however, is Beijing's steadfast commitment to the development of a modern fighting force. Organizational restructuring complements ongoing technological developments, and begins to fill crucial gaps in Chinese fighting capabilities. Regardless of the capability and operational gaps that may remain, the PLA's current reforms are but the start of a process that will significantly alter strategic thinking and operational conduct of the militaries in East Asia.

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<http://blogs.cfr.org/davidson/2016/02/22/as-chinas-military-modernizes-woody-island-deployments-are-just-the-beginning/>

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OPINION/The Strategist

THAAD, South Korea and China

By Rod Lyon

24 February 2016

In the wake of North Korea's nuclear test in January and its satellite launch in February, South Korea has shown a new level of interest in the topic of ballistic missile defence. Seoul officials are discussing with their US counterparts the possibility of deploying a Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system in South Korea. South Korea already has short-range Patriot missiles, but THAAD would provide a second, longer-range, top-tier layer to the country's ballistic-missile interception capabilities. Not everyone's happy about it. Beijing has made plain its opposition to any such deployment. And there are questions over just how much difference THAAD would make to South Korea's security.

Two misperceptions seem to have crept into the media debate on this topic, however. Some argue, for example, that THAAD is optimised for interception of medium- and intermediate-range missiles and is 'of little or no use' against short-range missiles. They use that argument to support a second: that deployment of a THAAD battery and its associated radar in South Korea is actually a move that advantages the US against China, rather than South Korea against North Korea.

Let's start with THAAD's abilities. Its manufacturer describes it as a 'capability to defend against short and medium ranged ballistic missiles'. And a quick look at the THAAD flight test results shows that the bulk of its testing has been against short-range targets. [Here's a video](#) of the November 2015 test in which THAAD intercepts both a short-range missile and a medium-range one. By contrast, it's largely unproven against longer-range threats such as intermediate-range ballistic missiles. In essence, then, THAAD is quite capable of intercepting short-range missiles: indeed, its mobile radar, the AN/TPY-2, can provide end-to-end coverage of short-range missile flights, enhancing the prospects for successful interception.

True, the South Koreans have already committed to upgrade their Patriot-2s to PAC-3s. That's been in train since early 2015 and might take a year or two to unfold. So their missile defence capabilities are already getting better. But Patriot's a point-defence system; THAAD adds both another layer and a larger footprint to the Patriot system. Both systems could still easily be swamped, of course, as interceptor numbers remain limited.

Second, let's turn to the US-China issue. China worries primarily about the system's surveillance capabilities. It's not concerned that a THAAD missile battery in South Korea could intercept a Chinese strategic missile bound for continental USA—that's not a realistic scenario. Rather it's concerned that THAAD's radar might be able to offer early tracking data to other parts of the US ballistic missile defence system—in particular to the Ground Based Interceptors responsible for defending the US homeland—thus degrading China's ability to target the US.

Its anxiety is a classic case of a security trilemma, where actions taken by one country in response to the actions of another—here the deployment of enhanced US BMD capabilities to offset North Korea's growing missile capabilities—complicate relations with a third player. Still, China's scarcely the first country to feel threatened by a ballistic missile defence radar. Russia worked itself into a tizz—not entirely without cause—when George W. Bush's administration proposed deploying an X-band radar in Europe to support a regional ballistic missile defence system against Iran.



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China's right to believe that THAAD surveillance data could be transferred to other BMD assets protecting CONUS. Indeed, one of THAAD's missions would be to strengthen US defences against the possibility of North Korean ballistic missile attack on CONUS. So it has to be able to transfer data to CONUS-based radars and interceptors. But the US already has a THAAD battery deployed on Guam, two AN/TPY-2 radars deployed in Japan (at Shariki and Kyogamisaki), space-based assets, plus a range of ship-borne radars and larger land-based radars in other parts of the Pacific theatre. Would a THAAD deployment in South Korea change much? The short answer is that it could improve early tracking of some Chinese missiles, depending on their launch point. Still, that might not make actual interception of those missiles much easier. ICBM warheads move fast. And sophisticated penetration-aids help to confuse missile defences.

On the other side of the ledger, there's a substantive gain to South Korea from deployment of an AN/TPY-2 radar in country: without its radar the THAAD system won't intercept anything. True, even with its radar THAAD won't make South Korea invulnerable; Kim Jong-un has other options for attack. Overall, though, there's an upside for South Korea in THAAD deployment. The case becomes more compelling the more Kim Jong-un relies on his nuclear and missile forces as his conventional forces deteriorate.

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<http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/thaad-south-korea-and-china/>

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OPINION/Columnists

Why Iran is Launching a Rocket

By Ariane Tabatabai

25 February 2016

Iran is hoping to launch a rocket next week. This is significant in and of itself, and also a good indicator of the Iranian security establishment's thinking now that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the international agreement limiting Tehran's nuclear activities, has gone into effect. It is also an example of the kind of challenges that lie ahead for the United States and other foreign powers dealing with Iran.

Tehran is preparing to launch a two-stage Simorgh rocket, or space launch vehicle, with the goal of putting a satellite into orbit. The Simorgh is named after a mythological Persian bird representing wisdom and healing. In the past, the country has placed four satellites into low-altitude orbit, but none stayed aloft for more than a few weeks; other attempts failed altogether. The Simorgh space launch vehicle is more powerful than previously used models, giving Iran a shot at a successful launch. Tehran has also been developing its satellite technology, and while its designs are nowhere close to the world's most sophisticated, it is making progress. If next week's launch is successful, it will mark an advance for the country in both delivery and communications capabilities.

Careful timing. Iran issued a notice to airmen (or NOTAM) for March 1-2 closing the air space above the Imam Khomeini Space Center in Semnan province, east of Tehran, indicating that the



launch will take place then. The event will inaugurate the Imam Khomeini Launch Pad, which the space center intends to use in the future to launch larger rockets.

The launch comes at an interesting time in Iranian politics. First, it takes place following the January implementation of the JCPOA. Having seen its nuclear activities limited by the agreement, Tehran feels compelled to assert power in other ways, including by undertaking cyber attacks, testing missiles, and, now, launching a rocket. These displays of power help satisfy the domestic factions who feel like the country made too many concessions, limited its nuclear program too much, and ultimately lost in the negotiations. They appease the hardliners, while allowing the moderates in power and their reformist supporters to continue implementing the nuclear deal and make progress on other items without substantial pushback.

Second, the launch is scheduled to take place (link in Persian) shortly after the 10-day annual period when Iran marks the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The weeks preceding and following this period generally provide a platform for Tehran to showcase its “achievements.” The Simorgh does that job: Members of the Iranian political and security establishments have been hyping (link in Persian) the Simorgh in the media, highlighting that it has a range of 500 kilometers, roughly twice that of older Iranian rockets, and a payload two or three times heavier.

Third, the Persian New Year, March 20, is right around the corner. For the regime, it’s crucial to make sure that when Iranians look back at the past year, they don’t just remember that Iran undid some key parts of its nuclear program under the JCPOA, but also that it stepped forward in other domains. Projecting power with a rocket allows the government to end the year on what it sees as a positive note.

Fourth, the launch, which seems to have initially been scheduled for February 23-24, a few days before parliamentary and Assembly of Expert elections, will now take place after voting. The official campaign cycle (which started around February 18 and ends with the February 26 elections) and the months of politicking that preceded it have highlighted deep divisions within the country and the regime. The Simorgh, true to the symbolism of its name, is a good healer, allowing the government to end this period of disagreement and unify the political and security establishments (until the next big thing divides them again).

The rocket launch, like missile testing, serves another purpose, too: It helps the regime continue its narrative of self-sufficiency, independence, and progress on scientific, technological, and military fronts. This narrative allows Tehran to signal to adversaries that it’s a power to be reckoned with, while reassuring domestic audiences and rallying them around the flag. Since the early 2000s, the narrative has been framed around the nuclear program, which today remains the centerpiece of the Iranian revolutionary self-image. But Tehran also tries to highlight its mastery of various other technologies, and show it can develop them without help from the outside world, by underlining the progress it has made in the drone, cyber, missile, and space domains in addition to the nuclear fuel cycle.

To be sure, Iran bases many of its “own” designs on those developed by other countries, including the United States. It relies heavily on foreign technology, essentially taking parts from elsewhere and assembling them itself, stamping “Made in I.R. Iran” on the finished products. But the country’s obsession with self-reliance—which goes back to the rule of Reza Shah in the first half of the 20th century, and was revitalized by the isolation stemming from the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s—remains a driving force behind Iran’s science-and-technology programs, and is still central to the story it tells itself.

Pushing the defense envelope. The planned rocket launch is further evidence of Iran’s determination to develop its space delivery vehicle capabilities. While the Simorgh is not a ballistic



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missile, it does represent a proliferation concern, given the level of overlap between space launch vehicles designed to put satellites into space and ballistic missile technology.

The launch also illustrates Tehran's willingness to push the envelope in terms of weapons development without actually violating the terms of the JCPOA. In fact, such non-nuclear technological and defense activities are important to making sure that JCPOA implementation moves forward. That's because the Iranian security establishment will more easily tolerate the concessions made under the JCPOA if it feels like it can boost its cyber, missile, and space capabilities.

Iran's pursuit of these non-nuclear defense technologies presents a challenge to the United States, the other powers that negotiated the JCPOA with Iran, and the international community, because they require an adequate response that doesn't jeopardize the deal's implementation. It would be in no one's interest to see the agreement derailed and Iran restart nuclear weapons development.

Managing Iranian mischief will require self-awareness in Washington, allowing it to see the limits of its own power so that it allocates resources to battles it can actually win. Washington also has to distinguish between actual violations of JCPOA terms and Iranian efforts to project power, which while not desirable, don't jeopardize the deal or US national security. In other words, knowing which Iranian offenses are felonies and which are mere misdemeanors will allow the United States to make sound policies. Tehran is sure to continue to try to project power—possibly in more substantive ways than it has so far—and increase its capabilities in various operational domains. US leaders should remain vigilant and begin compiling a list of possible responses that wouldn't directly or indirectly threaten the JCPOA.

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<http://thebulletin.org/why-iran-launching-rocket9190>

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ABOUT THE USAF CUWS

The USAF Counterproliferation Center was established in 1998 at the direction of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Located at Maxwell AFB, this Center capitalizes on the resident expertise of Air University, while extending its reach far beyond - and influences a wide audience of leaders and policy makers. A memorandum of agreement between the Air Staff Director for Nuclear and Counterproliferation (then AF/XON), now AF/A5XP) and Air War College Commandant established the initial manpower and responsibilities of the Center. This included integrating counterproliferation awareness into the curriculum and ongoing research at the Air University; establishing an information repository to promote research on counterproliferation and nonproliferation issues; and directing research on the various topics associated with counterproliferation and nonproliferation .

The Secretary of Defense's Task Force on Nuclear Weapons Management released a report in 2008 that recommended "Air Force personnel connected to the nuclear mission be required to take a professional military education (PME) course on national, defense, and Air Force concepts for deterrence and defense." As a result, the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, in coordination with the AF/A10 and Air Force Global Strike Command, established a series of courses at Kirtland AFB to provide continuing education through the careers of those Air Force personnel working in or supporting the nuclear enterprise. This mission was transferred to the Counterproliferation Center in 2012, broadening its mandate to providing education and research to not just countering WMD but also nuclear deterrence.

In February 2014, the Center's name was changed to the Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies to reflect its broad coverage of unconventional weapons issues, both offensive and defensive, across the six joint operating concepts (deterrence operations, cooperative security, major combat operations, irregular warfare, stability operations, and homeland security). The term "unconventional weapons," currently defined as nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, also includes the improvised use of chemical, biological, and radiological hazards.

The CUWS's military insignia displays the symbols of nuclear, biological, and chemical hazards. The arrows above the hazards represent the four aspects of counter proliferation - counterforce, active defense, passive defense, and consequence management.